

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 AID-05 IGA-02 MC-02 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 L-03

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R 301400Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3860

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 69

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI PFOR XA

SUBJECT: REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINT STUDY

REF: STATE 20621

1. THE FORCE - RWANDA SITUATION PROBABLY ONLY OF MINIMUM VALUE TO STUDY NOTED REFTEL. RWANDAN ARMED FORCES CONSIST OF ABOUT 3,500 CONVENTIONALLY ORGANIZED TROOPS. ARMAMENTS CONSIST PRIMARILY OF SMALL ARMS AND SHORT-RANGE ARTILLERY. AIR FORCE CONSISTS ONLY OF SEVEN LIGHT SPOTTER AIRCRAFT AND SMALL HELICOPTERS.

2. THREAT - GOR RECOGNIZES IT VIRTUALLY HELPLESS AGAINST ATTACK FROM ANY OF ITS LARGER NEIGHBORS (ZAIRE, UGANDA AND TANZANIA). GOR FOREIGN POLICY UNDER FIRST REPUBLIC (1961-1973) SUFFICIENTLY ISOLATED THAT ZAIRE BROKE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS (OVER CONGO MERCENARIES) AND UGANDA (AMIN) THREATENED BOMB KIGALI. HISTORICAL ETHNIC DIFFICULTIES LED TO TWO (1963 AND 1966) ARMED INCURSIONS INTO RWANDA FROM BURUNDI WHICH WERE REPULSED IN SMALL ACTIONS (ALTHOUGH THEY LOOM LARGE IN CURRENT FOLKLORE). UNDER SECOND REPUBLIC, GOR HAS UNDERTAKEN FOREIGN POLICY BASED IN FIRST INSTANCE ON GOOD RELATIONS ITS NEIGHBORS. GOR ALSO RECOGNIZES IT
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HAS NO PROSPECT OF UNDERTAKING SUCCESSFULLY ANY OFFENSIVE

AGGRANDIZEMENT. THERE IS, HOWEVER, RESIDUAL CONCERN OVER BURUNDI AND GOR KEEPS PRUDENT EYE ON ITS MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS. ANY INCREASE IN BURUNDI ARMAMENTS LEADS TO RWANDAN QUESTIONING WHETHER IT SHOULD RESPOND PROPORTIONALLY IN ORDER MAINTAIN A "DISSUASION FORCE".

3. ADVANCED WEAPONS - GOR CERTAINLY REJECTS AS BEYOND ITS NEEDS OR MEANS SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS SUCH AS JET FIGHTERS, MODERN TANKS AND MISSILES. IF OFFERED AS A GIFT, IT WOULD PROBABLY ACCEPT A MAXIMUM OF HALF A DOZEN SUBSONIC PLANES (JET OR PROP), SOME BASIC ARMORED VEHICLES AND LOS ANTI-VEHICLE/ANTI-PERSONNEL MISSILES. SUCH EQUIPMENT COULD NOT BE MAINTAINED UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY CONTINUED FOREIGN TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE.

4. MULTILATERAL - EMB BELIEVES GOR WOULD BE RESPONSIVE TO MULTILATERAL AFRICAN INITIATIVES TO LIMIT ARMS SINCE IT WOULD BE IN RWANDA'S INTEREST AS A SMALL AND MILITARILY WEAK COUNTRY. HOWEVER, GOR WOULD ALSO PROBABLY HAVE LITTLE INITIAL FAITH IN AN ACCORD IN VIEW TEMPTATIONS TO WHICH INDIVIDUAL AFRICAN STATES SUBJECTED TO AT LEAST OF WHICH IS PERSONAL EGO AFRICAN MILITARY LEADERS AND NECESSITY APPEASE THEIR MILITARY POWER BASE.

5. GOR HAS HIGH REGARD FOR OAU AND OCAM. IN CASE MILITARY THREAT IT WOULD CERTAINLY SEEK TO ENVELOP MORE ORGANIZATIONS. GOR ALSO PLACES PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON WHAT IS TERMED THE TRIPARTITE (ZAIRE, BURUNDI AND RWANDA) AS FOCUS OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION. GOR TRIPARTITE POLICY BASED IN PART ON ENVELOPING BURUNDI INTO JOINT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ENDEAVORS AND THUS REDUCE POTENTIAL MILITARY CONFLICT. BUT SHOULD IT OCCUR, RWANDA WOULD LOOK FIRST TO ZAIRE FOR DIPLOMATIC AND, IF NECESSARY, MILITARY AID.

6. USG ROLE - GOR HAS CORRECTLY RECOGNIZED THAT ITS SECURITY DEPENDENT ON DIPLOMATIC POSTURE. SHOULD THAT FAIL, GOR WOULD THEN SEEK SUPPORT FROM LARGER NEIGHBORS AND INTRA-AFRICAN ORGANIZATIONS. UNLESS IN EXTREMIS, GOR WOULD BE RELUCTANT RECEIVE EITHER OVERT OR COVERT US MATERIAL SUPPORT. SECURITY GUARANTEES FOR RWANDA FROM A NON-AFRICAN STATE SUCH AS USG WOULD BE NON-STARTER. GOR HAS PERIODICALLY SHOWN INTEREST IN US MIL TRNG. SUCH AID COULD BE RATIONALIZED AS CONTRIBUTING TO GOR DEFENSE POSTURE AND CONFIDENTIAL

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THUS REDUCING LIKELIHOOD CONFLICT. HOWEVER, ANY US ASSISTANCE WOULD LIKELY BE SO MARGINAL AS TO BE NON-DETERMINATIVE. DEPT PLUS EMBS BUJUMBURA AND KIGALI HAVE PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED POSSIBLE US ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OF MUTUAL VALUE BOTH RWANDA AND BURUNDI WHICH MIGHT REDUCE POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT. BOTH GOR AND GOB HAVE DECLARED INTEREST AND ARE PURSUING SUCH PROJECTS. EMB KIGALI VIEW HAS BEEN THAT USG EFFORTS TOWARD THAT GOAL BEST ACHIEVED VIA MULTILATERAL MECHANISMS

SUCH AS UNDP. FOR PURPOSES SUBJECT STUDY, HOWEVER, AN ACTIVE
OPTION WOULD BE TO REVIEW USA POTENTIAL FOR LIMITING CONFLICTS
(AND NEED FOR ARMS) BY ECONOMICALLY SUPPORTING SUCH BORDER
PROJECTS EITHER THROUGH BILATERAL (AID) OR MULTILATERAL INSTITU-
TIONS. EMB REALIZES THAT SUCH PROJECTS AS NEW OR IMPROVED
BORDER ROADS COULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED FACILITATIVE TO
CONFLICT. FRITTS

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